DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 423 387 CE 077 130

TITLE	Cutting Edges IV. Innovation and New Directions in the Educational Provision of the Workers' Educational Association. WEA Education Development Fund Reports 1996/97.
INSTITUTION	Workers Educational Association, London (England).
ISBN	ISBN-0-900823-84-5
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	28p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Workers' Educational Association, Temple House, 17 Victoria Park Square, London E2 9PB, England.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Access to Education; Accreditation (Institutions); Adult Education; Agency Role; Case Studies; *Delivery Systems; Educational Change; *Educational Innovation; *Educational Practices; Educational Trends; Equal Education; Foreign Countries; *Labor Education; Outcome Based Education; Outcomes of Education; Postsecondary Education; Program Development; Research and Development; School Guidance; Teacher Education; Tutors; Voluntary Agencies
IDENTIFIERS	*United Kingdom; *Workers Educational Association

ABSTRACT

This document reports on five research and development projects that were funded in 1996-1997 by the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) to promote innovation in workers' education in Britain. The five projects and their major activities and/or outcomes were as follows: (1) The Learning Outcomes Strategy Project (monitored and refined a common learning outcomes approach to course evaluation that was initially developed in 1993-1994); (2) The Accreditation Initiative Project (developed a national register of accredited courses designed to provide an overall picture of accredited provision in the WEA and established a network of contacts in each WEA district to provide details of districts' accredited programs and disseminate information within districts); (3) Tutor Training and Support Project (developed and introduced minimum tutor training standards across all WEA districts and developed and supported a network of district training contacts); (4) Equal Opportunities (Access) Project (developed guidelines on equal opportunities issues and practices, formulated a training strategy and materials supporting equal opportunities practices, designed a framework of support for tutors and voluntary members engaged in embedding equal opportunities principles in educational provision, and produced an evaluation methodology for monitoring the training strategy's and materials' effectiveness); and (5) Educational Guidance Project (provided learner-centered, impartial guidance to enhance students' experience of learning). (MN)

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Cutting Edges IV

Innovation and New Directions in the Educational Provision of the Workers' Educational Association

WEA Education Development Fund Reports 1996/97

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Published by Workers' Educational Association
Temple House, 17 Victoria Park Square, London E2 9PB
ISBN 0 900823 84 5

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Introduction

The projects described in this collection of reports were funded by the National Association of the WEA through its Education Development Fund (EDF) in 1996/97. This research and development programme reflects the priorities of the National Association as defined in the National Strategic Plan and develops work initiated by EDF funding in previous years. These areas are the Learning Outcomes Strategy, Accreditation, Tutor Training and Support, Equal Opportunities, and Educational Guidance. The aim has been to achieve a unified approach to these areas which will enhance the quality of all the courses we offer and widen participation to new constituencies of students who could benefit from what we do.

The Learning Outcomes Strategy is now recognised, by informed opinion outside the WEA as well as within the Association, as an effective means of demonstrating the quality of teaching and learning which takes place in WEA courses. First funded by the EDF in 1993/94, the strategy has been developed and refined by trial and monitoring in the Districts until it has become acceptable to Branch members and tutors alike: this year sees its full implementation in Liberal Adult Education courses in all Districts.

Another means of assuring quality in courses is by means of external accreditation. Although the accreditation of joint courses by the universities has proved largely unacceptable to Branch members, many WEA students do wish to have their learning formally acknowledged by nationally-recognised external agencies. The Accreditation Initiative has sought to develop a portfolio of courses, many accredited by the National Open College Network, which is available to all Districts and which provides opportunities for serious study and progression routes to adults.

Tutor Training and Support is another vital aspect of quality assurance in educational provision. In the past, all Districts had their own schemes for interviewing, induction and support for tutors, and for class visiting, but this project has sought to introduce minimum standards across these areas and to encourage best practice. The Equal Opportunities Project, in a similar way, has

attempted to bring coherence and a unified approach to policies which varied in their application from District to District. Training materials and strategies, together with an evaluation methodology, are intended to develop an equal opportunities approach to all aspects of the planning, design, access, promotion and delivery of WEA courses. This complements National equal opportunity practices in relation to employment practices and participation in decision-making.

The Educational Guidance Project aims to enhance students' experience of learning by offering learner-centred, impartial guidance to current and potential students. The rationale behind the project is predicated upon the belief that if students have all the information they need and can make informed choices, they are more likely to succeed, less likely to drop out, and will be able to contemplate a wider range of learning pathways in the future. Not all WEA students require educational guidance: this project offers access to impartial guidance to WEA students who feel that they would benefit from it.

These five projects represent but one segment of the research and development work which is being carried out by the WEA. Other major areas of National activity have included the Voluntary Member Training Initiative, the development of the National Foundation Programme and the Women's Learning Programme, development work on Progression Routes and Learning Pathways, and the strategic application of Information and Communication Technologies for Teaching and Learning. More localised projects, often arising from local needs analyses and schemes to widen participation in a particular area, continue apace and draw into continuing education those who have benefited least from their previous educational experiences.

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The Learning Outcomes Strategy

Context

This project was initiated by Eastern and South Eastern Districts in 1993 with the purpose of identifying an acceptable and effective means of demonstrating "to itself, to its students and tutors, and to its funders, that worthwhile learning takes place in WEA liberal studies courses". The rationale of this work was the recognition that the WEA, as an educational provider, had a duty to assess the quality of its provision and that a major factor in any such assessment is evidence that learning has taken place.

This is the fourth year of the project. In the first year a survey was carried out to document current practices in the Districts for describing student learning and implementing course evaluation. There was also a feasibility study involving tutors and Branch members to consider the acceptability and practicalities of describing learning outcomes. A pilot study by two groups of tutors in their Branch courses informed the production of student proformas, Tutors' Notes and Notes for Tutor Trainers which were used in the training carried out with Field Staff from the Districts.

The second stage of the project involved holding pilot studies throughout the Association. Analysis of the pilots revealed that there was agreement that student learning was a crucial part of any quality assurance strategy, but there was not universal agreement about how this could best be achieved.

The third stage saw support for the progressive implementation of the Strategy across the Association.

Objectives

To monitor and refine the implementation of a common Learning Outcomes approach across all Districts in order that full implementation in all liberal studies courses may be attained by the end of the 1996-97 session.

Activities

Between February and April 1997, sample sets of course documentation were reviewed and discussions were held with every District regarding the documentation and the implementation of the strategy.

The survey of course data involved a detailed review of advertising material, course syllabuses, students' Learning Outcomes forms, tutors' reports, and Tutor/Organisers' monitoring records, matched against the District's set of Tutor Notes and procedure. The District visits were to offer an 'external' observation on the success of their procedures and documentation, to compare this with the District's own internal evaluation, and to identify and recommend any necessary modifications to written material, administration, training activities or member dissemination.

Outcomes

This phase of the project revealed that the Learning Outcomes Strategy is now firmly implemented as part of almost every liberal studies course. With one or two isolated omissions, all essential elements of the Strategy are to be found in all District procedures.

The overall impression gained from discussions with Districts is that they are positive about the Learning Outcomes Strategy, and that there is general approval about the manner in which it has been developed, implemented and supported.

Full implementation of the Strategy has entailed increased workloads for all involved, and this seems to have been coped with well. Most students accept that there is a need for some form of course evaluation and a proportion recognise the benefits to themselves and to their tutors of describing their learning.

There has been an improvement in the quality of the syllabuses. A significant majority of students (75%) complete most of the items on the Learning Outcomes course evaluation forms, and tutors are taking account of what students are saying. The monitoring of tutor reports and student Learning Outcomes forms is established in most Districts, although there is room for some improvement.

It is recognised that the tutor's attitude to the Strategy is a determining factor in its successful implementation at course level. Where tutors are positive, students respond positively. Similarly the Tutor/Organiser's role is central to the quality assurance aspect of the Strategy: monitoring what is said by students and tutors about teaching and learning allows appropriate action to be taken to confirm what is successful and modify what is not.

Potential Development

It is important to develop ways of monitoring quality assurance processes and developing self-assessment procedures across the Districts in order to ensure that the essential aspects of the Strategy are reflected in practice.

Further work needs to be carried out on some aspects of the Strategy's full implementation. Continuing training and support for tutors and Field Staff is necessary and there are still uncertainties in some Districts - more often at the completion stage of courses than at the beginning - about some of the procedures.

Further investigation could be carried out into modifications to the Strategy for use in accredited courses, short courses or targeted provision. There are problems where students have learning difficulties or physical disabilities, but sensitive adaptations can allow tutors to gather and report the views and achievements of their students.

Overleaf: extract from *The Learning Outcomes Strategy, Tutors' Notes for 1996/97*

Learning Outcomes

1.1 In the educational context in which the WEA now operates, it is essential that we are able to demonstrate that worthwhile learning takes place in our courses. The WEA Learning Outcomes Strategy, implemented nationally from 1996/97, is intended to review student learning based upon specified and agreed learning proposals. It has been designed to:

- encourage tutors to plan courses on the basis of intended student learning outcomes
- provide a framework for students and tutors to discuss and agree what learning and teaching is to be undertaken
- help students and tutors describe and confirm what learning is being, and has been, achieved
- provide a procedure for tutors and Districts to monitor the success of each course in terms of learning achieved within a quality adult learning experience

1.2 It is the Association's belief that the Strategy will result in improved learning and teaching in ways that are consonant with our traditions, whilst providing the evidence that we need that worthwhile learning does take place in our courses.

1.3 **This is what we want you to do:**

- write a course syllabus that includes learning outcomes and other specified elements
- discuss and agree your syllabus with the proposed learning outcomes* with your students
- encourage and assist your students to describe their learning and to comment on the course
- review (a) individual and group learning achievement, and (b) students' course evaluations, then write a summary report.

These notes give you some guidance on each of these activities.

* *A learning outcome describes a learner's knowledge, understanding and skill in terms of what s/he is able to think, feel, say or do after a particular learning experience, be it a formal course or any other activity.*

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The Accreditation Initiative

Context

The Accreditation Initiative began in November 1995, developing out of the work of the National Accreditation Working Group. One of the initial tasks was to gather information from Districts concerning the extent and nature of existing programmes of accredited work and of relationships with accrediting bodies, particularly the various Open College Networks (OCNs). There were also concerns to avoid duplicating research and development work on courses when very similar courses may already be offered in other Districts.

The Scottish Association was working in an entirely different accreditation context, and was unable to exchange accredited courses with English Districts.

In addition, it was thought necessary to demonstrate that the Accreditation Initiative was driven not by funding but by the expressed wish of significant constituencies of students to have their learning and achievements formally recognised.

Objectives

To update the Register of accredited courses offered across the Association and to assist with the transfer of such courses between Districts.

To create a profile of accredited work in the Association, with reference to priority areas, curriculum, quality and funding in order to assist Districts in their planning.

To develop, through the joint National Open College Network (NOCN) /WEA working group, satisfactory methods of course transfer, and to improve membership arrangements for the WEA within Open College structures.

To liaise with the Accreditation Working Group and maintain contacts with District accreditation representatives.

To work with Districts on issues relating to the administration of accredited courses, in order to improve understanding and proper use of the FEFC funding formula.

Activities

Liaising with the network of District accreditation contacts, with the Accreditation Working Group and with the National Office on issues involving accreditation.

Maintaining the Register of accredited courses and assisting with course transfer.

Working on the joint working group with the NOCN in order to develop systems for the transfer of courses between Districts, and to rationalise and standardise membership issues.

Maintaining contact with the Scottish Association regarding progress to an accepted OCN standard.

Outcomes

A network of contacts has been established in each District, with the dual role of providing details of the District's accredited programme and also disseminating information within the District.

The National Register of accredited courses provides an overall picture of accredited provision in the WEA, allowing Districts to consider the suitability of existing courses elsewhere in the Association, and offers procedures for transfer, rather than incurring the research and development costs of writing new programmes.

All Districts have received advice on improving membership of OCNs, and avoiding having to join several OCNs in any one District.

Course transfer arrangements between OCNs is operating successfully, allowing straightforward transfer of OCN courses between WEA Districts and different OCNs, dispensing with the need for Simultaneous Recognition. Liaison with the OCNs is less complex since NOCN has developed a much more central co-ordinating role in OCN work in England and Wales. This role has altered NOCN's relationship with the DfEE and FEFC and the new situation benefits the WEA as a national provider.

The programme of Schedule 2 briefings in the Districts is continuing. These briefings update District staff on key issues relating to funding issues and on interpretations of the funding methodology which could impact on accredited programmes.

Further exploration regarding the transfer of courses between English Districts and the Scottish Association has been undertaken. An OCN for Scotland is being established, and the Scottish Association is to be invited to become a member. This will allow the transfer arrangements within England to extend to Scotland, and will immediately benefit both the TUC programme and the UNISON scheme.

An Information Technology and Accreditation Seminar has been held, and the basis for exchanging accreditation information between Districts was established in this curriculum area. The issue of accreditation was also a significant feature in the seminar on quality assurance in Basic Skills provision.

A third Accreditation Seminar was held in June 1997, in Birmingham, which strengthened the contact network in the Districts. This has led to an updated and revised National Register of accredited courses.

Potential Development

Further work needs to be undertaken to develop the Register, with additional information on Superclass Code, Schedule 2 position, and Qualification Aim Code. This will be followed by a further revision of the Register in January/ February 1998.

Liaison with NOCN is necessary to confirm the new OCN membership arrangements and review mechanisms for the exchange of courses through NOCN, in relation to strategic curriculum objectives.

The work of the Accreditation Initiative needs to be related to discussions on curriculum issues in the next Strategic Plan.

The benefits to be gained from establishing an OCN in Scotland should be further explored and plans made to assist the Scottish Association with its involvement.

The work of the Accreditation Initiative needs to be examined in the light of recent and forthcoming Reports to explore the implications for accredited programmes in the Adult Learners Curriculum Development Unit and the introduction of the New Learning Pathway for Adult Returners.

Overleaf: *Guidance Notes on Internal Transfer of NOCN Accredited Programmes*

GUIDANCE NOTES ON INTERNAL TRANSFER OF NOCN ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES BETWEEN WEA DISTRICTS

Protocol for Transferring WEA Programmes

1 All requests shall be greeted in the spirit of professional peer support and staff development

2 The role of the OCN is to be facilitative and not judgmental in relation to the programme's transferability

3 All programmes being transferred should follow the procedures outlined in the guidance note (WEA/Trans 1) and use the Proforma WEA/Trans 1

4 In the unlikely event of problems arising, the individual OCN and WEA District will contact their representatives on the WEA/OCN Committee who will facilitate a resolution.

Responsibility of the Receiving WEA District

1 Complete WEA/Trans 1 where appropriate and with authorisation from the WEA District Secretary

2 Send Proforma to originating WEA District requesting documentation and authorisation for transfer

3 Ensure WEA/Trans 1 has been signed by originating OCN to confirm suitability for transfer

4 On receipt of WEA/Trans 1 and supporting documentation, contact local OCN and arrange meeting with Development Worker

5 The OCN Development Worker at the receiving end will discuss the following issues in relation to the programme:

- Target Group
- Learner Support
- Recruitment
- Local Progression Routes
- Tutors
- Moderator
- Accommodation, resources
- Health and Safety Issues
- Internal Moderation (if appropriate)
- WEA District Quality Assurance and monitoring arrangements

NOTE:

NO MAJOR CHANGES CAN BE MADE TO THE PROGRAMME/UNITS AND THERE MAY BE NO CHANGES TO THE PROGRAMME UNIT TITLES.

All WEA transferred programmes are subject to annual review by the WEA Nationally and it is at this stage only that changes can be made.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Tutor Training and Support

Context

The WEA National Strategic Plan has identified tutor training as an area for development, and this project began as an attempt to define national standards and guidelines for the induction, support and initial training of tutors. The first stages of this project focused on gaining a picture of current practice in the English Districts and the Scottish Association. This was accomplished through discussions with District Training Contacts and analysis of questionnaires: the findings were summarised in an interim report produced in March 1996.

Three consultation days with District Training Contacts were held in April/May 1996. These concentrated on reaching a consensus about what is expected of a WEA tutor; what minimum standards for initial training and support needed to be in place to contribute towards the achievement of this; and how to ensure these standards were met.

A standard three-hour Induction event was written and piloted in nine Districts during the summer and autumn of 1996. The pack incorporated notes for trainers, anticipated learning outcomes, a session plan, materials and activities. A dissemination seminar, attended by representatives from all thirteen English Districts and the Scottish Association, was held in October 1996, and a report produced. The following month, the proposed minimum standards for Initial Training and Support for Tutors were accepted by the National Executive Committee.

Objectives

To support the delivery of induction/ initial tutor training activities in the Districts, consistent with established minimum standards.

To act as a 'national focal point' for information on good practice in areas related to tutor training.

To provide support for Districts updating Tutor Handbooks, and act as a resource

bank for materials to supplement the standard Induction Pack.

To provide support for, and research the training needs of, the District Training Contacts, including the organisation of national or regional meetings.

To continue to explore the possibilities of WEA accredited tutor training.

Activities

In January 1997, a comprehensive and professionally-produced induction pack, arising out of, and informed by, the consultation and piloting process, was produced to support the agreed minimum standards. The major elements of this cover the production of Tutor Handbooks, the format and outline content for a three-hour induction event and guidelines for class visiting. It was distributed throughout the Association.

The agreed minimum standards which are embodied in the training pack for tutor induction and initial training are intended to support the delivery of consistent training and support across the whole Association. It is recognised, however, that Districts will wish to retain their ability to reflect their own particular circumstances, cultures and priorities in such training events.

The minimum standards cover interviewing, Tutor Handbook, induction event or briefing, telephone support, class visiting and a debriefing session.

The implementation of minimum standards as an ongoing process was supported in all Districts. During the academic year 1996/97, an analysis of the agreed minimum standards was undertaken in all Districts and the Scottish Association. A Training the Trainers event, focusing on recruitment and selection of tutors, class visiting and running training events, will reinforce the minimum standards and encourage best practice.

A 'job description' for District Training Co-ordinators was produced and a network of District Training Contacts was developed and supported. A further meeting of District Training Contacts was held in April 1997, and a report produced.

Outcomes

This project has demonstrated that tutor training and support requires National co-ordination, especially if the minimum standards are to be achieved during the year 1998/99, and effective monitoring is to be carried out.

There is a crucial role to play in the maintenance of the training network established by the project, with regular updating through newsletters and the organisation of, at least, an annual residential meeting.

Further development of tutor training requires more consistent standards of training in generic adult teaching skills, as well as the enhancement of subject-related tutor training.

Potential Development

There is a wide variation between Districts, in relation to the priority accorded to this work. Districts may need further support from the National Association to ensure that a District Training Co-ordinator (rather than merely a contact) is appointed. District Training Co-ordinators need remission from other duties, adequate administrative support and a discrete training budget. Some may need additional 'training the trainers' input.

Consistent support is required to ensure that the minimum standards are fully discussed and methods found for achieving them in every District.

Accurate monitoring of training programmes is difficult to achieve because of variations between the Districts in recording such activity. A standard computerised system is needed to give an accurate picture of the levels of work in this area.

Overleaf: *Minimum Standards and Best Practice Statement for Initial Tutor Training and Support*

MINIMUM STANDARDS

1 Interview/briefing using Equal Opportunities principles and practices

2 All Tutors to be provided with a tutor handbook which should cover everything a tutor should be able to do

3 All Tutors should attend an induction event (minimum 3 hours) within one year of being appointed to the tutor panel. If this is not possible, new tutors should receive an equivalent briefing from a staff member

4 Once tutors have started teaching, follow up to consist of:

- i Support phone calls (after the first teaching session, and again after 3/4 weeks)
- ii Class visit/informal support visit. Priority should be given to tutors new to adult teaching
- iii If possible a debriefing session, (at least by telephone) singly or in groups after the end of the tutor's first contract.

5 Participation in training and support activity to be recorded and monitored.

Best Practice

Further training and support could include:

- Telephone support networks
- Tutor support scheme
- Observation/shadowing of experienced tutors
- Tutor newsletters
- Invitations to regular seminars on issues of general significance, and curriculum interest groups
- Tutor Organiser surgeries/team meetings in particular curriculum areas
- Provision of teaching materials

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Equal Opportunities (Access) Project

Context

The WEA is committed to ensuring that equal opportunity principles are followed throughout the full range of its activities and educational provision. This Equal Opportunities Project was a direct response to the request from the WEA National Education Committee for specific pieces of work which would contribute to the achievement of the WEA's strategic goals.

East Midland District has a good record in addressing equal opportunities issues and, prior to the adoption of the WEA's new Constitution in 1991, had already established its own equal opportunities working party and had begun to devise a policy statement for the District.

Objectives

The aim of the project was to produce guidelines and materials for the National Association in order to develop an equal opportunities approach throughout the full range of the WEA's provision.

Within this broad aim there were four key objectives:

- To produce a series of guidelines on equal opportunities issues and practices within course planning, design, access, promotion and delivery.
- To produce a training strategy and materials to support the equal opportunities practices that will be targeted at both tutors and voluntary members throughout the organisation.
- To devise a framework of support at local and national levels for tutors and voluntary members engaged in embedding equal opportunities principles in educational provision.
- To produce an evaluation methodology that will monitor and assess the effectiveness of the materials and the training strategy in the short and the longer term.

Activities

The Project has worked through a series of four phases: Phase One involved the development of a set of principles and an associated set of standards.

In Phase Two research was carried out into the current attitudes and practices of tutors and voluntary members. There was also an analysis of the current take-up of training opportunities on Equal Opportunity issues.

Phase Three involved research into existing materials and good practice in Equal Opportunities both within the WEA and beyond. Following this, a range of training materials was developed which was piloted in Phase Four of the project.

A database of contacts and correspondents has been established and meetings at Barlaston and the National Conference assisted in the strategic planning of training events and monitoring attendance data.

A support strategy and an evaluation methodology have also been devised so that the impact of the training pack can be assessed twelve months after its introduction.

Outcomes

The aims of the project have been achieved by meeting the original objectives in the following ways: by the creation of a comprehensive pack of training materials and the development of a strategy to implement a training programme; by the creation of a support framework within the training strategy, and the development of an evaluation methodology. All these outcomes relate to work with both part-time tutors and voluntary members.

The training pack aims to develop greater awareness and understanding of equal opportunity issues, to explore their implications for the work of the WEA and to translate those issues into practice. The course covers participants' experience of discrimination and the effects of discrimination in society. Practical ways of challenging discrimination are explored, and participants will be encouraged to plan the practical steps to turn theory into practice.

Potential Development

Agreement has been reached to continue the project for a further year, in order that it can provide support to the introduction of the training programme, and undertake the required monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

The overall aim of the training proposals is to ensure that by the end of the next planning cycle (1998/99 - 2000/01) all Field Staff, District Secretaries, tutors and

voluntary members will have been offered a place at an appropriate training event.

It is necessary to establish infrastructures that are capable of sustaining an incremental increase in provision so that appropriate arrangements are in place to deliver training on a 'whole organisation' basis.

The role of the key contact person in each District will become increasingly important to the processes involved in embedding equal opportunity principles throughout the Association.

It is important that realistic implementation targets are set which recognise the developments that already exist and can also accommodate the diversity of local needs and circumstances. Such targets need to make a significant contribution to the process of applying agreed policies, but also - if the process is to be truly national - they need to be attainable by all Districts.

Overleaf: extract from *Equal Opportunities Statement in the WEA Charter*

8. Equal Opportunities

8.1 The WEA commits itself to the establishment of good equal opportunities policy and practices. To this end it has introduced an Equal Opportunities Policy Statement which provides a framework for action in three areas:

i) education provision

ii) participation in decision-making

iii) employment practices.

8.2 The WEA will take positive steps, within available resources, towards implementing and encouraging equal opportunities practices in its education provision by redressing any inequities in access, opportunity and participation in course provision, by paying special attention to accessibility, curriculum design and delivery, student support and student costs.

8.3 The WEA will take positive steps to remove barriers to involvement by its members at local, District and National level and will positively encourage participation by suitable training and support.

8.4 The WEA is committed to ensuring that all staff, and prospective staff, are treated fairly on their relevant merits and abilities, and that the implementation of the WEA Staff Development Policy fully reflects this principle.

In order to achieve this, the following areas will be subject to review, to ensure that they do not discriminate against members of any particular group:

i) recruitment, interview and selection procedures

ii) training and other developmental opportunities

iii) general terms and conditions of employment.

8.5 The implementation of the policy will be:

i) supported by a process of training for voluntary members and staff

ii) monitored at National and District level.

The policy and its efficacy will be subject to review at least every three years.

8.6 Responsibility for ensuring that detailed arrangements are in place for the implementation of the WEA Equal Opportunities Policy Statement at National and District level resides with the National Executive Committee. In determining such arrangements, due consideration will be given to:

i) ensuring that potential students from under-represented or disadvantaged groups are encouraged to participate in educational provision through means which are consistent with the WEA's ethos, policies and practices, including the provision of courses for specific Target Student Groups.

ii) ensuring that student enrolment processes do not inhibit participation from socially excluded groups by means, amongst others, of applying the Guiding Principles of the WEA's Equal Opportunities: Access to Provision Statement.

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Educational Guidance

Context

The WEA already offers students information, help and support while they are studying, but there is a need, highlighted in the FEFC Inspection in 1995, to develop a more strategic approach to guidance.

This project develops earlier work on guidance funded by the Education Development Fund, but takes a broader approach in that it aims to ensure that students on all WEA courses - not just those in particular types of accredited or targeted provision - should have access to educational guidance if they require it.

Appropriate guidance should be offered at those stages when a student may require it: pre-entry and entry, on-course, and pre-exit. This guidance should be impartial and embedded in equal opportunities policy and practice.

Objectives

The aims of the project were to assist the WEA at National and District level to formulate and implement a more structured approach to educational guidance which is voluntary, flexible, informal and responsive to students' needs; is embedded in the routines of the organisation; can be adequately resourced by the Association, and can be described and audited.

The key tasks of the project were to identify minimum standards for the provision of educational guidance throughout the National Association; to assist each District, where required, to produce a phased plan for offering educational guidance provision which meets the agreed minimum standards, and to identify the role of the National Association in achieving the minimum standards throughout all Districts.

Activities

There was regular liaison at National level throughout the course of the project. At District level, there were three key points of contact: preliminary discussions focused

on an audit of each District's guidance provision, and the first visit to Districts (January/February 1997) identified guidance development activities for Districts to work on.

A second visit to Districts (May /June 1997) was to introduce the final agreed student entitlement to guidance and to draw up action plans for guidance delivery. Districts were asked to consider the roles and responsibilities of staff in relation to guidance, and how they could most effectively monitor guidance activity.

There was also liaison with organisations outside the WEA - some of whom are also seeking to clarify their offer of guidance - and these contacts were important in informing and refining progress of the project as well as keeping up to date with and contributing to the continuing debate about the nature of educational guidance and support.

Outcomes

After liaison with other providers who offer guidance, with WEA Districts and with the National Association, a Student Entitlement Statement was drawn up and agreed. This now forms part of the revised WEA Charter.

The Student entitlement statement defines the WEA's offer of guidance to its students.

- Pre-course information should help students decide if the course is right for them. If appropriate, students should be given the opportunity of referral to other educational providers or to providers of impartial educational guidance if required.

- While on the course, students should have detailed information about it and of what is expected of them; they should be offered help with planning their learning and given the opportunity to discuss their progress.

- Before the end of the course, students should be given information regarding their achievements, about what they could do next, and be offered referral to other providers of educational opportunities or impartial guidance if required.

All Districts have action plans for guidance to be offered to students in 1997-98 and the project will support Districts in implementing, monitoring and evaluating these schemes in the next phase of the project.

The views of the Districts in relation to guidance development have been collated:

this exercise has helped inform the planning of the next phase of the project and has also helped define the role of the National Association in relation to this work.

Potential Development

The second phase of this project will focus on continuing support for Districts in implementing, developing and evaluating their action plans. This will include training sessions for staff involved with guidance and the development of support materials.

There will be further liaison with other National Association projects to develop a consistent approach to the delivery of guidance across the Association's curriculum offer, ensuring that guidance issues are recognised to be at the heart of high quality educational provision.

A further round of consultancy visits to Districts will be undertaken to review progress and help introduce monitoring procedures for guidance systems. Inter-District training and Training the Trainers will be offered to named guidance representatives and others involved in the delivery of guidance.

Support materials will be developed and effective methods of cascading will need to be evolved. Further collaboration between National projects will ensure that guidance issues are embedded within all areas of the WEA's provision.

Overleaf: *Entitlement Statement on Educational Guidance and Information for WEA Students*

WEA NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE PROJECT 1996-97

Student entitlement statement: March 1997

EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE AND INFORMATION FOR WEA STUDENTS

The WEA has a variety of students with many different requirements. As an Association, we aim to offer the following, although certain aspects may not be applicable to you:

1 Before you start your course, or at the first session

(a) information about the course, about the WEA and other courses it can offer you
(b) help to decide if it is the right course for you, or if you will need any educational or practical support from the WEA or another source in order to complete the course
(c) referral to other providers of learning opportunities if appropriate, or of impartial guidance and information if required

2 While you are on the course

(a) detailed information about the course, and about what is expected of you
(b) help with planning your learning
(c) constructive comments and an opportunity to discuss your learning

3 Before you finish your course, or if you do not complete it

(a) information about what you have achieved
(b) information about what you might do next, with the WEA or in other contexts
(c) help to decide what next steps would be right for you
(d) referral to other providers of learning opportunities, or of impartial guidance and information if required

Who to ask

Different people in the WEA will be able to help at different stages: the District Office; your local WEA Organiser, Branch Secretary, or Course Tutor.

Tel: 0181-9621515 Fax: 0181-9634640
Email: info@wea.org.uk

Cheshire, Merseyside & West Lancashire
7/8 Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane, Liverpool L1 3BX
Tel: 0151-7098023 Fax: 0151-7080046
Email: office@cmwl.wea.org.uk

Eastern
Botolph House, 17 Botolph Lane, Cambridge CB2 3RE
Tel: 01223-350978 Fax: 01223-300911
Email: office@east.wea.org.uk

East Midland
16 Shakespeare Street, Nottingham NG1 4GF
Tel: 0115-9475162 Fax: 0115-9243513
Email: office@emid.wea.org.uk

London
4 Luke Street, London EC2A 4NT
Tel: 0171-3887261/3878966 Fax: 0171-3835668
Email: office@lon.wea.org.uk

Northern
51 Grainger Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE1 5JE
Tel: 0191-2323957 Fax: 0191-2303696
Email: office@north.wea.org.uk

North Western
4th Floor, Crawford House, University Precinct Centre,
Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9GH
Tel: 0161-2737652 Fax: 0161-2744948
Email: office@nw.wea.org.uk

South Eastern
4 Castle Hill, Rochester, Kent ME1 1QQ
Tel: 01634-842140 Fax: 01634-815643
Email: office@se.wea.org.uk

South Western
Martin's Gate, Bretonside, Plymouth PL4 0AT
Tel: 01752-664989 Fax: 01752-254195
Email: office@sw.wea.org.uk

Thames and Solent
6 Brewer Street, Oxford OX1 1QN
Tel: 01865-246270 Fax: 01865-204282
Email: office@ts.wea.org.uk

Western
40 Morse Road, Redfield, Bristol BS5 9LB
Tel: 0117-9351764 Fax: 0117-9411757
Email: office@west.wea.org.uk

West Mercia
78/80 Sherlock Street, Birmingham B5 6LT
Tel: 0121-6666101 Fax: 0121-6222526
Email: office@wmer.wea.org.uk

Yorkshire North
6 Woodhouse Square, Leeds LS3 1AD
Tel: 0113-2453304 Fax: 0113-2450883
Email: office@yn.wea.org.uk

Yorkshire South
Chantry Buildings, 6-20 Corporation Street, Rotherham S60 1NG
Tel: 01709-837001 Fax: 01709-372121/362900
Email: office@ys.wea.org.uk

Scottish Association
Riddle's Court, 322 Lawnmarket, Edinburgh EH1 2PG
Tel: 0131-2263456 Fax: 0131-2200306

WEA Brussels Office
Rue Royale 207, B-1210 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: 0032 2 2235552 Fax: 0032 2 2235555
Email: weaitc@pophost.eunet.be

WEA Web site: http://www.wea.org.uk

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The Workers' Educational Association exists primarily to provide adults with access to experience of organised learning which develops intellectual understanding, confidence and social and collective responsibility. Particular features of its approach to the provision of learning opportunities for adults include:

Valuing and making use of students' life experience

•

Involving students in organising provision and planning their own learning

•

Targeting students who have benefited least from the education system and from opportunities for further and higher education

•

Collaborating with other organisations and agencies to meet the needs of adult learners for educational guidance, equal access to provision, and for relevant, progressive and accredited learning opportunities

•

Offering high quality learning experiences underpinned by regular monitoring and evaluation of the programme

•

Providing staff development opportunities for professional staff and training for voluntary members

•

Promoting and supporting the voluntary movement by which the Association governs itself and decides its future strategy

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION
THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Temple House,
17 Victoria Park Square
London E2 9PB
Telephone: +44 (181) 983 1515
Fax: +44 (181) 983 4840
E-mail: info@wea.org.uk

Charity Registration Number 314001

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